initiates. Anyone else who eats it will become mortally ill. During the following night, the bieri will reveal to an initiate during his sleep the means of assuring the success of the hunt for which his help has been asked.

The bieri strictly forbids anyone, under pain of mortal illness, to [76] insult it. Its power is unlimited: it can cause a woman who has fled from the village to return to it; it causes lost objects to be found.

In spite of all the faith which the old Pahouin still have in the bieri, in the region which interests us one may say that the majority of the population has abandoned it, primarily because of its being driven out by the Christian missions.

IV. The buiti. The buiti, which our informants told us were of Mitsogho [Mitsogo] or Masango [Missanga?] origin (peoples of the right bank of the N'Gounié), is a protective association against the bivur. The information on this secret society was given us by Akam Eyene, the head of a buiti, who lived in the village Elong Eko on the Abanga. It is rather incomplete because this informant was unwilling to give us certain details and to answer numerous questions.

Possessors of bieri band together because of the fear of the bivur, against which the bieri by itself is powerless to protect them. Their association, the buiti, in its fight against the ngwel, shows itself as stronger and kills the bivur (and consequently the individual possessors of bivur). It also serves to reveal the beyem, who have evil intentions toward members of the buiti and to make their efforts ineffectual.

Every member of the buiti brings a piece of his bieri and a piece of the animal under whose protection he has placed himself. All of these are put in a box and constitute the fetish of the association, which also keeps such material things as:

A musical instrument, ngomi, a harp with eight strings. At the bottom of the resonance chamber of the one belonging to Akam Eyene were pierced three holes covered by three pieces of flesh of chimpanzee, gorilla, snake, elephant, eagle, panther, and rooster. This instrument accompanies the songs of the ceremony.

A bell, etsoge, a round hollowed-out fruit, into which are put little pebbles. It is equipped with a handle and is shaken during the songs.

A branch of raphia palm lying horizontally on two carved stakes called minsaga mi buiti. The whole thing is called obaka. During the ceremonies this branch is beaten with two sticks.

575 184 We have not been able to learn anything about the ceremonies of protection against the bivur. However, Akam Eyene told us that when a member of the buiti has inadvertently eaten the flesh of his protecting animal, which is absolutely forbidden, he holds a meeting called dzimba in the course of which the wrongdoer, after dancing, presents his case. Then the [77] head of the buiti absolves him, spitting scrapings of the bark of the ovañ onto his head.

525 198 The buiti has a secret language. Akam Eyene gave us only the secret names of certain of its initiates, which correspond to the animals chosen as protectors:

He himself	called	ndzikwe	chimpanzee
Ondo Ngema	—	ngilabongo	gorilla
Akum Eyene	—	ɔsingi	tiger cat
Ngema Eyene	—	mitumbu	panther
Bekeka Yebe	—	mogabene	elephant
Angwe Nseme	—	menyanga	snake
Mba Minkwe	—	meyasamba	rooster
Kumeyeme	—	mepeku	eagle
Abaga	—	ndzobe	wildcat

771 V. Totemism. Despite all questions which we have put to many natives of various tribes, we have not been able to find any signs of totemism. We were only told of instances of individual unions with animals, as in the buiti or following an akaga.

Family and Collective Life

000 In this chapter we will examine the life of the individual in the family and in the social group, from his conception until his death, in corporating into this framework the family and tribal organization as well as relations with strangers.

842 833 841 Conception (menoñ bum). A woman, we have been told by our male and female informants, cannot conceive until after she has menstruated four times. She is, in fact, forbidden to have sexual intercourse before her fourth period. At her first menses, the woman tells her mother or her mother-in-law if she is married (usually her mother-in-law, since there is hardly even a young girl, still with her family, without a husband); the latter henceforth supervises her more

than tribal ties. Nevertheless, politico-religious associations like the ngil did exist—very little is known about them today—which transcended clan barriers and contributed to a certain amount of tribal cohesion. On the other hand, certain individuals could have influence, sometimes authority, but never permanent command, extending beyond the limits of their clan. Usually the people involved were officers in initiation societies: the nsig nto, the Bané high judge, was probably a high-ranking initiate in the ngil. The njôô bôt (commander of men, war leader), the évet ("capita," caravan leader), the nkukuma (1) (rico hombre, rich man)—these men on the other

1. Emphatic form of nkukum (rich).

hand had only occasional authority and that within a limited circle.

b. The Clan

I call "clan" that which the majority of the Pahouin call ayoñ (mvôg, mvôk, in certain northern tribes) (2). It is perhaps the basic

2. Cournarie, 1933, in Coutumes de Nyong et Sanaga /Customs of the Nyong and Sanaga/ points out that ayong were divided into meyom (ayom). The ayom is formed by the coming together of several mvogo who, being descended from the same ancestor, consider themselves the issue of the same mother (obligation of exogamy). Occasionally deference is paid to the mvogo most closely related to the ancestor, and its head is called ntomba or nya moto nnam or mot nnam.

The collective group may gather together: Emoi of nda bot, Ekoan of myogo. All grown men may speak. Elders and distinguished persons then withdraw for deliberation (esok); they return to announce the decision. (J. B.)

structural unit of Pahouin society, at any rate the one the Fang of

631 Given Pahouin interest in a political system based on election, which
636 pretty well corresponds both with their individualism and with their
[181] mistrust of individuals, it may be that such a system has some chance of success if it is allowed to become Pahounized.

5. Associations

575 Traditional associations were undoubtedly less developed among the Pahouin than among other African societies with more closely knit or more stable hierarchical structures. The social groups at the core of clans or villages arose and decayed in accordance with migrations and "swarmings-off." They showed a kinship rather than an associational character.

Nevertheless, there existed within kinship as well as outside it associations not based on descent, voluntary and not de facto /discretionary?/. These were often characterized by initiations and had a magical or religious basis, with varying purposes.

The minsamba, "societies," were temporary, organized for a military operation (ôban, mvé'le) or for a trade journey to the coast or to the "trading-posts" of the Ogooué. The men who took part often came from different villages or even from different clans bound by an alliance (é'lat). They swore an oath of loyalty and mutual assistance, involving a ritual sacrifice followed by a communion
[782] meal; for a war enterprise, there might be a human victim, especially if it were a matter of avenging the death, kum mbim, of a monyañ (brother) and if there were a prisoner of war available to sacrifice. The association was dissolved once its end had been accomplished, but a bond persisted between its members.

[304] Similar temporary associations could be formed for large elephant
[441] hunts; they were moreover often confused with the nsamba dulu or nsamba ayak (traveling society, trade society) afterward organized for the sale of the ivory.

575 The most important permanent associations were those among the
783 initiates of different rites. But what was most often involved in these was a kind of relationship by way of a rite, which was not the rite's real purpose, or was so only adventitiously. When, for instance, all the inhabitants of a village took part in the é'sye purification rite, a strengthening of the fraternal ties among them certainly ensued, but the prime purpose was purification (1). /63/

575
628
783

1. Among the Beti (Eton) another rite is to be found that cuts across clan or tribal barriers: "étup is planted" to make peace, to end a family quarrel, to check an epidemic. The old men consult the spider oracle, /63/ then call the men together. The assembly is in charge of the mbongengañ (magic-makers—initiates of higher rank). The members of the two groups start to hurl mutual accusations. Then those who bring bad luck are pointed out, the biwonwolo. A shrub, meyan, is then planted, and a biañ /medicament/ is prepared in a pot, over which the audience swear an oath to give up behaving badly to one another. The biañ is then inserted into the nostrils of the biwonwolo in order to do away with the bad luck. (J. B.)

575
626
Nevertheless, certain rites had along with other aims that of setting up among the initiates an association that would produce a kind of dialectic of energies /sic/ (tyé, kié) between the group and its members. The principal society, which probably had a national character that cut across clan lines, was the ngil (1), about which unfortunately very little is known nowadays. The ngil seems to have been the main, if not the only, element of tribal cohesion on a political level. Its function was social control and defense, especially to preserve the society as a whole from the activity of sorcerers. By uniting initiates from all clans, it could settle interclan disputes by avoiding recourse to war or feud. It served to some extent as a police force and judicial system, with the initiates of lower rank carrying out the

1. The origin of this word is uncertain. It has been referred to ngil (njil) meaning gorilla; old administrative reports speak of "gorilla-men." There has also been suggested, less convincingly, a connection with ngul, meaning capacity, potency.

sentences passed by their superiors. In struggling against sorcerers, it had also a medical role, which for a while outlived its police role: Bertaut (no. 110) seems to have known it only under this aspect, which did not arouse so much administrative suspicion. Allys considers it to be the "war fetish," thus agreeing, apparently, with Allégret and Largeau. Martrou and Leroux refer in this connection to "franc-juges," which recalls Bearth's description of the nsig nto of the Bané.

Very little is known about ngil rites as a whole or about their symbolism. The initiation has some traits in common with the sɔ̂: preliminary physical and moral purification, flagellation, confession, a broth for a test made of horrible substances, representation of ancestors, symbolic transition from an epicene or androgynous to a monosexual state (2), blood sacrifices. It is probable that these traits

2. Or, on the contrary, according to Stoll, transition from a monosexual state to a bisexual completion.

are to be found in all important Pahouin rites. The sacred spot was a rectangular stockade, ésam, open to one side, with clay figures of the ngil and his "wife," (3) in front of which there was dug a

3. Or a single androgynous statue.

trench covered with a lattice in which initiates were hidden so as to prick the candidates with their spears when brought before the ngil after having had to climb through an ant pit (as in the sɔ̂). There was also a liana representing a python, the precise role /i.e., significance/ of which I do not know. The neophytes had to bring ancestral bones, which were kneaded into the clay of the figurines. The ceremony included a test intended to show if the neophyte was nnem (bearer of évu), which would have entailed his being put to death immediately; /64/ a blessing of the ritual spears which, according to Trilles, bore totemic designs; finally a sexual symbolism termed "obscene" by the authors mentioned, who give no further description of it.

The initiates left their houses in procession, masked or painted with white and red (mourning and rejoicing colors, respectively),

575 preceded by drummers and trumpet players and by a boy (uncircumcised?) entrusted with holding across the village street a liana, which the cortege broke through only after sacrificing a chicken. The uninitiated did not have the right to be present at this procession. The 769 ngil-leader, masked and painted in red and white, carried his per- 534 sonal bieti (bieri); he was always accompanied by a full orchestra (mvet guitar, mbac and nkul drums, mejan balafo). The initiation ceremony lasted a month (1).

304 1. The ngil mark was a tattoo below the sacrum, therefore covered by the loincloth. Initiates did not go out except in masks, so that theoretically it was impossible to recognize them.

Members of the ngil circulated in small groups, masked, to carry 757 out inquiries in villages where a case of sorcery was suspected or to put sorcerers to death. For ordinary cases they applied the ordeals in current use (minkal), but for serious cases it was necessary to arrange for an initiation ceremony: this feature is found in nearly all ritual associations, where initiation is always accompanied by collective catharsis.

304 Among other masculine initiation societies the ndôngô rite must be mentioned, whose initiates have two incisions on the nape of the neck. Its symbolic /features/ include confession, purification, seclusion in darkness, passage through a narrow corridor or a low doorway, a liana-serpent, a consecrated lance, a sacrifice (2), a

782 784 2. Dogs were sacrificed. Ndôngô canceled serious minsem /breaking a taboo/ like homicide or incest and allowed initiates to eat pork, mutton, and porcupine. (J. B.)

825 horrible brew. The ritual animal was the tortoise. The purpose of this rite seems also to have been protection against sorcerers and, perhaps, to improve luck, ma'a. The initiation of circumcised youths, bekungu, is perhaps a juvenile form of ndôngô. Both survived until the Second World War. Ndôngô does not seem to set up

575 as strong interclan ties as does ngil; however, the initiation leader may belong to a different clan from the initiates.

[783] Esye (éɨye or tyo?) is a purification and reconciliation rite, described by Father Guillemin for the Beti; it does not extend outside the ranks of an ayôm (segment).

575 825 Among the Boulou of Sangmélima, the Ntoumou of Ambam, and the Fang of Djoum, I found some medical society initiates who call themselves "snakes," using the proper word, benyo (sing. nyo), not the euphemism minkol afan (lit., bush lianas). Their specialty is treating bites and capturing and taming snakes. Initiates are known within the society under the name of one or another variety of snake, conferred at initiation. There are several degrees of initiation (three?): first-degree initiates /65/ are called bo' b'ayañ, children of the Dendraspis; advanced initiates are bo' be mvôm, children of the python. Their medical knowledge seems quite extensive; they [161] claim, in particular, to be immune to /snake/ bites, thanks to the application of a special bian (medicament) through incisions at the time of initiation. The main center of this association would appear to be among the Mekaé of Messamena, and it is therefore not properly Pahouin.

575 626 754 All these ritual associations contributed to social order mainly through defense against malevolent sorcerers. The sorcerers, for their part, are often organized in secret societies in order to join forces against the organs of control and repression. Inevitably, therefore, these societies are ill understood. Nearly all of them must have included beyem (sing. nnem), that is, bearers of évu. In fact, if one may be subject to possession involuntarily and even unknown to oneself, one may also nyoñ évu, receive évu, always in the sense of a burden. A person entering a beyem association has to pay for his entrance by the sacrifice of a near relative and also accept the imposition of a special prohibition, the breaking of which (nsem) brings instant death.

575 754 The ze mimfaka (lit., road panthers), notorious under the name of leopard-men, were an association of man-eating sorcerers, a kind of counter-ngil (1). Nowadays what is involved may well be a

1. There are also independent ze mimfaka.

pathologically degenerate form of the ngil itself. In the course of a

judicial inquiry at Ambam in 1948 after a raid on ze mimfaka, an old chief who was a Protestant and an elder of his church declared, in so many words, that "the white man has weakened the ngil, and the beyem have taken it over; now it is the ngil of ngbwel /sorcery/."

The initiates of the kôn or kun, a kind of magic that enables one to assume another person's strength without destroying his body, also seem to be grouped into a secret society with meetings every seven years.

Beyem associations do not usually include both sexes; male and female sorcerers meet together only occasionally, for orgiastic sabbaths.

The distinction between white and black magic is, nevertheless, difficult to draw the present time, and one can never tell offhand if the small groups springing up nearly everywhere to protect their members against bad luck by using, in addition to remnants of traditional rites, recipes copied from magic manuals printed in France, belong to the one or the other.

To come back tothe traditional associations, we must underline /the fact that/ in them there was a complete separation of the sexes, to such an extent that women were often forbidden to speak the name of a men's society or to show any kind of knowledge, even superficial, of its rites. The prohibition was less stringent for men with regard to women's rites, since the nsem, the breaking of a taboo, was for them punished by physical incapacity or illness rather than by death. /66/

A women's rite like mevungu had both a village aspect, on account of its geographical framework, the jurisdiction of its huts, and an interclan aspect as a result of exogamy. Much less is known of these women's rites than of the men's, for the very good reason that men are not allowed to know anything about them. Missionaries have condemned mevungu as obscene: I have heard that initiates who have gone through the menopause are supposed to play a male role in dances miming coition, without being able to obtain the slightest proof or the least detail (1). What is certain is that this is a rite of

1. A woman "chosen for her large vagina" presided, seated with legs spread apart. Each initiate would go tickle her and pull the clitoris. (J. B.)

fecundity, of fertility, and also of the hunt: an unlucky hunter may have his wife initiated so as to ward off bad luck.

have his wife initiated so as to ward off bad luck. This is not the only example of the indirect intervention of one sex in a rite of the opposite sex. Allégret points out that it is a "woman who has had bad luck fishing" who "finds the ironwood for making the war fetish." It certainly seems that he has mixed up ngil with ŋ̀, but the example remains valuable. Therefore, though traditional rites and the associations of initiates of these rites were strictly masculine or feminine, this does not altogether exclude the intervention of the opposite sex. No more can be said in our present state of knowledge (2).

2. The other important women's rite, ngòmbò, was more especially limited to old women. The participants built a sort of basin out of four banana trunks and their leaves, in which a vegetable biañ /medicament/ was prepared that gave protection against theft. (J.B.)

Contemporary cults and associations, on the other hand, are open to both sexes, whether religious or politico-religious societies or mutual-aid associations.

The two principal politico-religious associations are the bwiti (or mbuti) and the ngòl, well described by Balandier (no. 175). They have spread to the north from Gabon and the Middle Congo and are not of Pahouin origin. They are beginning to penetrate Boulou country, where they have not been as successful as among the Fang of the south, undoubtedly because of the lesser degree of social destruction.

Bwiti was originally a "tyogo" ancestor cult, comparable to the Pahouin biéri, if one accepts Trilles. It must have first appeared among the Pahouin at the beginning of the century, probably among Pahouin families cut off from their clans and thus from the biéri and sò rites, whose significance is primarily ethnic and familial. Libreville was an important point of contact, not only between African peoples of different stock, but also with European religious systems. Modern bwiti borrows a great deal from Christianity and also from freemasonry, which was fairly widespread in Gabon before the war, especially in half-caste circles and on the periphery of principal towns. In assuming this syncretist character, bwiti appears at the same time as a nationalist—or Africanist—movement and as a progressive movement abandoning the old cults or rather modernizing them. It is the

575 object of official suspicion /67/ and rightly so, since it has free re-
669 course to human sacrifice and to physical liquidation of apostates; it has assumed the traits of a secret, often surreptitious, society. The liberal character of the administration since the 1946 reforms has aided the spread of bwiti by giving emphasis to the frankly political side of its activities: the municipal elections of 1956 were in large measure a bwiti triumph.

576 Bwiti, like the old rites, first of all works to protect its members against the beyem (bearers of évu), and its whole purely African side recalls those ancient rites. As in ngil, members have to bring in to the society the bones of their ancestors; as in prohibited /criminels/ societies, they often have to agree to the putting-to-death or mutilation of a close relative; as in the melan, they drink a brew based on narcotic herbs that enables them to "see the bwiti." There is a sacred musical instrument, the ngomi harp, sculptured figures or reliefs, especially on hut poles, recalling the biéri cult, a special language, prohibitions, etc. But the weekly ceremonies are influenced by the [177] Mass; the progressive degrees of initiation probably derive from free-masonry, as does the lodge organization; finally, the Bible is used and interpreted in a manner, often political, that can only come from Protestant influence.

575 Balandier has shown how bwiti is trying to effect a reorganization
669 of Pahouin society in Gabon, by providing it with an ideological basis, a total collective weltanschauung permitting an integration of customary forms of behavior with those resulting from the colonial situation. It would be interesting to carry his investigation into the Cameroons and into Spanish territory in order to study the reaction of very similar societies in quite different politico-administrative and economic contexts.

177 Ngol is much more recent than bwiti and represents, perhaps, an
575 even more striking example of politico-religious syncretism. Its
669 source is an African interpretation, a mythology based upon Free French propaganda in French Equatorial Africa from 1940 to 1944. Nzela me Ngol—General de Gaulle—has become a "white" hero, sent to liberate the black man by revealing the white man's (1)

1. "Logically" one might have expected this role to be ascribed to Governor General Eboué.

177 secrets and powers (power-ngul, to be related to ngôl?). There is thus
575 a "cargo-cult" side, already observable in certain traditions and
668 pseudo traditions mentioned by Trilles and Largeau. The mixture of Christian and traditional elements in the ritual suggests bwiti, with definitely a greater ceremonial elaboration in terms of modern technology, such as representations of aircraft, submarines, etc. The liberating-hero cycle involves a putting to death (by his white brothers) and a return by parachute, plane, or submarine—there are different versions, sometimes co-existing. The society's hierarchy copies that of the /68/ administration: the master of the lodge, wearing a kepi with star, is the nzela me ngôl; he is accompanied by "presidents," "presidents in chief," "commanders," "inspectors general," "governors" and "governers general," "militiamen," doctors," etc. (1). There is

1. 'One of the highest officers is the "adjutant of the guard," who is in charge of the police and of carrying out legal decisions.

a parallel female hierarchy, having, in particular, a "douane" /possibly "duenna"?—Tr./, who is supposed to have an eye on good relations between households. The political purpose is clear: the ngôl hierarchy has often replaced that recognized by the administration, sometimes with positive practical results, thus connecting up with the movement for Pahouin regrouping in its Gabonese form.

575 In the Cameroons this regrouping has in fact quite a different
747 aspect. It appears to be essentially a tentative social and political
668 revival of clans rather than a tribal regrouping, which is not felt to be as necessary as in Gabon. It leans especially, on the religious level, more toward disciplinary /sic/ schism than towards syncretism, at least for the time being. Some of its leaders have left or wish to leave the missions to set up national churches that would allow, for instance, polygamy, but they do not oppose Christian dogma, which they proclaim that they accept, constantly maintaining that it is rather the missionaries who have altered it, consciously or not. Here the influence of the American Presbyterian Mission is predominant. It might be said that the Cameroons clans, especially the Boulou ones, have been organized into a pattern of Presbyterian synods. The movement has been less successful among the Beti, where Catholic

575
777
449 influence is stronger, but there too one finds associations influenced by foreign types of ecclesiastical organization.

614
576 Since 1946 the Boulou clans have formed associations, sometimes proclaimed in conformity with the law of 1901, and since 1950 gathered into the N'Tem-Kribi Tribal Union, which covers primarily Boulou, Fong, Fang, Ntoumou, and Mvaé. Each clan has a central board elected during an annual or biennial ésulan, and local boards. Membership is not automatic: members have to apply for admission, pay subscription and entrance fees. At the core of each clan association there are "societies" of young people of both sexes, of married women, of nonvoters /abstinents/, etc. The young people's "societies" are certainly the most unusual. They were formed with official approbation at the time of the abolition of forced labor recruitment. The "societies" used to bargain with local authorities over projects like road maintenance or the construction of works of art /sic/, the money received being turned into a common account and used, either to help the members meet bride-price payments or other expenses, or—particularly—to arrange festivals and banquets.

575
454 In large towns Pahouin migrants join de jure and de facto associations, generally within a tribal, not a clan, framework. These associations have protective and mutual-aid purposes /69/ and are sometimes quite powerful. To these should be related the tontines or subscription societies consisting of small numbers of laborers, servants, or minor employees, who pay into a common fund the larger part of their monthly wage, each member in turn being able to draw upon the sizable sum thus collected each month. The last two institutions are in no way specifically Pahouin, nor characteristic of the Cameroons or Gabon.

6. Law and Property

a. Source

671 Pahouin law has always been complex. Formerly, it dealt primarily with the status and condition of persons /statut et de l'état des personnes/ upon which the property system was dependent. Under the influence of the economic changes brought about by colonization, the law with regard to property has become definitely independent of the law of persons, the latter being inclined to grow simpler with the dissociation of the old social and family organizations.

b. Legal Power

692 The contemporary /legal/ organization is, except for a few details, the same in the three territories inhabited by the Pahouin. In the Cameroons and Gabon, criminal law /la justice repressive/ is in the hands of magistrates administering the French penal code; civil law is administered by first- and second-degree courts presided over by an official of administrative rank, sitting with two African assessors. There are also the so-called customary courts composed entirely of Africans and not entitled to deal with questions of personal status /état des personnes/, and a mediation system preliminary to all court action, in the jurisdiction either of chiefs or of first-degree court assessors. The system in Spanish territory is similar, but the first jurisdiction of the penal law is entrusted to officers called jefes de demarcación.

Alongside this official framework may often be noted a semi-official mechanism, sometimes tolerated, sometimes prosecuted as illegal. This consists of courts or arbitrators of the ngôl, of the bwiti or of the meyoñ, and also disciplinary committees of the missions, official or semi-official.

671 The distinction between civil and criminal was undoubtedly less sharp in former times. It did, however, exist, and an organization like the ngil dealt primarily with criminal cases, the major crime from which all others arose being that of ngbwel, sorcery. A homicide /meurtre/ might be a civil matter, when the circumstances precluded the probability of an act of sorcery; a well-planned theft, on the other hand, or even outstanding commercial acumen, could involve a capital charge.

627 Outside the ngil, law was administered in the first instance by the esa or ntol mot of the extended family or the village. This was a matter of disciplinary rather than legal power, at least so long as the ntôl's decisions concerned only his bobenyañ. When the case (étom) 628 went beyond a purely family framework, recourse was had to a judge, ntyi'i mejô, palaver-cutter, chosen within the clan from a kinship level nearer the ancestor. If several allied clans were involved, arbitrators or assessors were taken from among the mintôl not directly concerned in the suit. Finally, a diviner or magician, mvimvi'i or [711] ngengen, could be consulted, either visited in his own dwelling or into consultation.

[675] Suits between members of an association were, and often still are, conducted by an official of the association /71/.

6:Alexandre and Binet--105 G-5 (1946-1954) 1958 FH9 Fang FH9

7. The Position of Women(1)

562

1. J. Binet, "Condition des femmes /The Position of Women/," Cahiers internationaux de sociologie, 20, 1956, Presses Universitaires de France, and "Statut des femmes dans le Sud-Cameroun /Status of Women in the Southern Cameroons/," to appear in Recueils de la Société Jean Bodin, 1956, Edit. of the Librarie Encyclopédique, Brussels.

If the older people are to be believed, the position of women according to orthodox custom was that of minors. However, there is nothing in traditional theory that justifies such a negative attitude towards women: some clans name women among their eponymous heroes, and there are legends attributing to the creator god (Zambë) a daughter in whose honor certain rites were performed. At the present time the tribal societies making an effort to revive the old clans and to revise their codes of manners and their customary laws always keep a place for women at the core of the executive /état-major/, but very often the role of women is secondary: they are dancers, singers, organizers of dances, or stewards watching over followers—in short they only carry out men's orders. Women are also sometimes associated with men in religious /confessional/ so-
575 cieties (Protestant or, more frequently, Catholic), but mostly they form separate groups, formerly so-called secret societies, today Christian devotional confraternities, which enable women to meet together, to set up a hierarchy and have leaders of their own. Women do not actually participate in the life of the community /cité/ or, better, they form a community among themselves, distinct from that of men.

In law women seem to be at a disadvantage, but it is not clear that they owe this to genuine antifeminism. In fact, no one is perfectly free in customary law; only the patriarchal head of a family
825 possesses full legal capacity. Marriage does not confer majority on a woman, and a girl possesses greater independence than does a
848 married woman. In the sexual sphere this is clear: illegitimate births involve no disgrace; a child is always welcome. If born before marriage, it belongs to the mother's family. And it is not unusual for respectable fathers to wait until a daughter has borne children before marrying her off.

791 754 The sorcerer also assumes several forms: he may be soothsayer, physician, priest, etc., but none of these different manifestations are either legal or accepted; they will always operate in a secret manner, and the sorcerer will be the agent of the secret and unacknowledged, the extralegal, cult. [406]

575 764 791 Just as we find two distinct persons nearly always in opposition, so we observe them presiding over two distinct types of association. And, unfortunately, just as practitioner and sorcerer have almost always been confused, so have the true secret societies directed by the former been confused with the secret societies (organized also within the tribe) that are quite different, often antagonistic, and under the authority of sorcerers, who create them and without whom they do not operate. The former are established to work for the well-being of the tribe, at least they were so originally and they still are on the whole at the present time. The others, on the contrary, are set up for the specific benefit of members and against the tribe.

[One paragraph omitted. --Translator]

The principal point at issue here is that the totems of secret societies directed by practitioners and the totems of secret societies directed by sorcerers are utterly different. We shall see later on how incorrect the term "totem" is in connection with sorcerers. While the first kind of totem are chosen entirely for the benefit of the individual who acquires them with no concern about the effect on others, the second are chosen by the owner with a view to the evil he can do with them to others. [407] Hence a profound difference in their selection: the first, like the totems of clan and tribe, can legally be any kind of living thing and are in fact, animals, birds, insects, trees, but only useful things, because the point is to benefit from their good qualities. There is nothing of this in connection with the second kind of totem: to injure others is the point, the unique purpose, the raison d'être; therefore, harmful animals like panthers, reptiles, and wild boars will be the first choice.

[Three paragraphs omitted. --Translator] [408-414 omitted]

[415] The practitioner's business is to have an effect upon good and bad "spirits." To call up good spirits as we see for

515 instance in the invocations of marriage songs; to fend off bad
757 spirits, departed shades, ghosts, or apparitions and force them
791 out of the village so they they will go far away and leave the living in peace; in brief, to protect in some manner those who invoke them -- this is the practitioner's role. The end is achieved through appropriate homage and sacrifices, either directly, by protecting the suppliant from bad luck and accidents, or indirectly, by making it impossible for the enemy -- whether spirit, shade, man, or object -- to do harm. All this is worship, religion, the practitioner's role.

But, on the other hand, to be master of these spirits, preferably of the malevolent ones, to seize the spirits, and to force both to do evil, is no longer worship or religion, but magic, and this is the sorcerer's business.

[Four paragraphs omitted. --Translator] [416]

We make the following generalizations:

The practitioner is the agent of the acknowledged cult, which is sometimes public, sometimes secret.

The sorcerer is the agent of the unacknowledged cult, which is always secret.

Both practitioner and sorcerer are leaders or members of secret societies. (1)

> 1. In place of "secret societies," which leads to confusion, it would be better to reserve this term, as has been proposed, for the societies set up by sorcerers and to use "confraternities" for those directed by practitioners.

Secret societies controlled by practitioners are within the tribe.

Secret societies controlled by sorcerers are marginal to, or directed against, the tribe.

754 societies, and totems that are basically actually spurious copies of the first.

754 From this we are led to a study of the secret societies
791 directed by both and of the very different, though often undifferentiated, role that practitioners [bĕĭgan] and sorcerers [bĕyĕm] play in them.

Chapter XIII

Practitioners and Sorcerers

Their Secret Societies

[Pp. 425-433 omitted, being mainly taken up with the theories of others. --Translator]

[434[[Three paragraphs omitted. --Translator]

575 In my opinion the secret society is derived from the tribal organization itself. The dominating position which the practitioner has been able to assume [in the secret society] comes from the role he has necessarily been called upon to play in the ordinary course of events. Similarly, the new totems given to initiates after initiation are only imitations of those bestowed upon them by their fathers at birth.

[One paragraph omitted. --Translator]

575 Before youths are admitted to membership with warriors,
791 it seems quite natural to put them through a series of tests designed to prove whether they are really fit to play their part and to perform the services which the tribe demands of them. Consequently, girls and women are immediately eliminated, for the benefit of the male population. The series of tests cannot take place in the village in front of everyone; the compulsory elimination of some would, aside from other considerations, arouse violent resentment against the leaders and be followed by inevitable revenge. Hence the necessity for withdrawing to the background. The chief may appoint a representative, for instance an outstanding warrior, but there is no one better [435] fitted than the practitioner for this role and for taking a leading and soon

575 exclusive position. Religion must, in fact, be an important
191 and necessary element in these gatherings. For is it not necessary for the ancestral spirits to be consulted, to be made interested in their young descendants and their spirits made to enter into them; and is it not necessary to attract good influences and keep away harmful ones? All this is the work of the agent of worship, who alone is proficient. Also, throughout the time during which the young warriors are under his supervision, he has complete control over them, and this power he will indeed want to keep. But with their return to the village, the youths, now warriors, fall back under the authority of the tribal chief. But this is no obstacle. The practitioner easily recruits neophytes from among those who have been most devoted to him, and with these he forms a society more closed than the previous one and which is, above all, permanent, because of its objective and the manner of its establishment. The tribal chief will have to bow to and obey this group whose control has inevitably escaped him. He almost always agrees to enter it himself, mistakenly hoping therein to recapture his partially lost authority. ...

575 Such, reduced to the simplest terms, is the origin of the secret society. It has gradually become legal and, in the natural course of things, one of the tribe's most lively organizations. Obviously, it has been greatly modified through time and as a result of changing forms. It has nevertheless remained just as it was in its general structure.

In imitation of the tribe, clan, and family, from which it has been copied, the secret society also has totems: totems of society, of subdivisions, [436] of chiefs, and of individuals. Having taken over the tribal chief's role, the practitioner has replaced him in everything that has to do with these particular totems. Yet it must be observed that since the principal power of these totems lies in secrecy, they will not encroach upon the tribe nor fight against either tribal or other totems. A person entering a secret society is simply seeking additional strength and power or a further guarantee of personal security.

Not only do individuals have totems, but just as the tribe is subdivided into clans and families, so the secret society is divided into classes, each of which has its totem.

[Three paragraphs omitted. --Translator]

575 769 We are dealing here with a recognized though secret cult, an accepted cult, addressed to spirits and -- of especial importance -- to the spirits of ancestors. On this subject the practitioner is entirely in agreement with the chief and the tribal traditions.

754 575 But in addition to natural magic to which the practitioners are confined, so to speak, "there is another," says Mgr. Le Roy, (1) [437] "which claims to borrow its power and methods

> 1. La Religion des Primitifs [The Religion of Primitive Peoples], p. 340, "La Magie [Magic]."

from beings of the invisible world, from the disembodied ancestral spirits of men and even of animals, from independent spirits ....

"This anti-Religion has, like Religion, its worship, incantations, evocations, rites, fetishes, offerings, sacrifices, ministers, feast days, places of assembly."

First of all, it has its ministers, who are none other than the sorcerers. For this reason in the preceding pages [cf. Chap. 12--Translator] I have already tried to give a sketch of the sorcerer and to make a clear distinction between him and the practitioner by, describing the main traits of his personality, by sorting out a complicated whole in which many points meet and many lines cross and interpenetrate.

[Three paragraphs omitted. --Translator]

Leaving out everything not directly bearing on the subject under discussion, let us examine only the following points, which will show both the great similarities and considerable differences that, from the totemic point of view, exist between these two orders of phenomena.

1. Like the practitioners ... [438] sorcerers have united in secret societies for the purpose of assuring their vitality and power.

2. The feast days and initiation ceremonies have numerous points of resemblance. However, those of the sorcerers' cult exhibit a much more marked character of horror, cruelty, and especially an extreme immorality, and a hideous obscenity, dominated by a perverted cult of blood descent and procreation.

515
791
754

3. The practitioners' secret societies all have their own totems. Each group has a guardian totem which carries out for them the role of the ẽtotore or the mvame of tribe, clan, or phratry. Yet, while tribal, clan, or phratry mvame may belong to any of the three kingdoms, animal, vegetable, or mineral, or even occasionally to the sidereal or the spiritual world, the secret society's totem is always an animal, a real animal, sometimes a reptile or fish, often a bird.

Sorcerers' secret societies, however -- and this constitutes an essential difference -- never have this kind of totem. Their mvame or guardian is always a spirit, a being that belongs to the spiritual or disembodied world. That spirit may, and often does, manifest itself (we are speaking from the native's point of view) in animal form, though it will not be a true animal, a fact about which sorcerers unanimously agree. The "spirit" manifests itself, they all will say.

4. Every "practititioner" on the day of his initiation and admission into the secret society, receives a particular, individual totem, usually an animal or a bird. But no physical link connects them; as with the personal mvame received at birth, there is simply a spiritual, mystical kinship between the two.

575
754
825

Every "sorcerer," on the day of his initiation and admission into the secret society, also forms an alliance with an animal, but that union has quite a special character. There is a real, physical kinship acquired by an exchange of blood, and a real alliance so that from that day onward the animal obeys the man and the man the animal: their lives are bound together. [439]

Strictly speaking, that animal is therefore not really a totem in the sence I have defined. The natives give it a special name: the élâñéla. European writers, ethnographers, and others, have referred to it as a nagual, and all the phenomena connected with the nagual is called nagualism. It has almost always been confused with the individual totem; nothing could be more unsuitable or actually more untrue.

[Two paragraphs and tables omitted on pp. 439-450. --Translator] [451]

[One paragraph omitted. --Translator]

575
754

1. Sorcerers, following the example of practitioners, have and still do set up secret societies:

a) throughout the entire Fan tribe;

b) in neighboring Bantu tribes.

I might here point out that I have never come across such associations among other African peoples, such as the Pygmies.

2. These secret societies meet at night in very mysterious fashion.

[786]

3. They are always essentially licentious to such a degree that, according to many writers, unbridled obscenity is the main objective. In my opinion, it is primarily an accompanying circumstance, aimed at controlling and binding the initiates by means of highly erotic and degrading pleasures.

However -- and this is my final point here -- there is one fact which has many a time misled the most conscientious observers, the most eager to learn the truth, and which, combined with the rule of secrecy, curiously complicates the problem. Just as practitioners have ranks and a hierarchy in their secret societies, so sorcerers have instituted ranks and a highly organized hierarchy. Hence there are several kinds of gatherings. Sometimes there is a sort of general assembly for all who belong to the association, in which case the purpose is a celebration, almost always of revolting obscenity and cruelty. All the witnesses clearly agree on this point.

But beside these "general" celebrations for the whole membership, there are others of a much more secret character to which only sorcerers, the true and sole leaders of these assemblies, are invited. Notified by a password to which I shall shortly refer, they gather at the appointed place and there [452] a very particular kind of feast takes place about which it is difficult to give precise details. It can well be imagined that those who belong to these associations keep silent. The rule of secrecy is absolute and inexorable; moreover, their own interest is at stake. It will always be very hard, if not impossible, to throw light on many facts and factors whose disclosure would nevertheless be extremely valuable from the religious point of view.

[Two paragraphs omitted. --Translator]

754 575 828

Sorcerers meet on certain days at a specified place. In most cases this meeting has been decided upon in advance at the previous gathering. But it may also happen that the high chief wants to convene his followers unexpectedly. How then is this done?

The manner is most mysterious.

A chief whom I once questioned on this subject told me that he heard the call during his sleep, that a "voice" informed him of the day, hour, and spot, and that this happened quite often. What is to be made of this reply? I must admit that I do not know. It can be stated definitely that certain sorcerers [453] are very clever at thought transmission even over long distances; such difficulties do not bother them.

One day I observed the following: I was chatting freely in a hut with a Fan who considered himself a friend of ours and who did, in fact, do us many services. I was sitting on his bamboo bed and he on a stool facing me. Suddenly I noticed a little bundle of sticks, some painted red, the others white, a few pointed, the rest not. What was most astonishing was that it seemed to me that the fairly large bundle had not been there a moment before. I hastily called it to our friend's attention because he could not have seen it, having his back turned. ...

[Two paragraphs omitted. --Translator]

"It's nothing, don't pay any attention," he said. He picked up the bundle and hid it carefully, adding, "Above all, don't mention it to anyone -- you would do me a great deal of harm!"

As his reply did not satisfy me, I wanted a further explanation.

"No, no!" he kept repeating, "It's a deep secret (endzâ̂ndzâ̂n ɓki, lit., the forbidden mystery)."

754 575 828 203

At last after much urging, he decided to admit, after making me promise never to say anything to anyone, that he was a sorcerer of the Ngil rite and that this was the way of convening the next meeting.

"According to the color painted on the sticks," he said, "I know where I'm to go; the number of sticks tells me how many days until my departure for the meeting; the white ones indicate

the leaders who will be there, as each has his private mark. That's all."

"But why are some pointed and others not?"

"Oh, that! No, that's a deep secret. If I were to tell you that I'd be punished by death at the next meeting."

[Pages 454-462 omitted. --Translator] [463]

[Two paragraphs omitted. --Translator]

All practitioners' societies recognize ritual sacrifice. In many cases a human victim is slain and eaten. These sacrifices are often characterized by what seems to us revolting cruelty and horror. I shall have occasion to deal with this point more fully when discussing sacrifice.

These are ritual sacrifices: immolation is not done for the pleasure of killing any more than consuming the victim is for the pleasure of eating human flesh. This is so much the case that a woman is never sacrificed: "Munga kɛ́ dzamadzam, kɛ́ kie ve nsissim: A woman is of no importance (from the sacrificial point of view)," runs a Fan proverb, "She has no power over spirits because she has no soul."

At sorcerer's feasts, on the contrary, and in the societies they organize, men are eaten for the pleasure of eating human flesh.

According to all the Fan and all Africans, sorcerers leave their boeies in order to go and feed on the hearts of other men while asleep. Hence their name, bɛ́ndzi bur, eaters of men. Sometimes they do this themselves, sometimes it is done by a spirit that possesses them. I willingly admit, of course, that there is nothing true in these accusations, at least as regards the way in which the sorcerers work. But one thing is undeniable, the fact of cannibalism.

[One paragraph omitted; p. 464 omitted. --Editor]

Chapter XIV

Totems of Sorcerers and of their Secret Societies

The Nagual and Nagualism

[Summary omitted--Translator] [466]

154 b) Imitating the classes of practitioners, the classes of initiates controlled by sorcerers have class totems. These classes are recruited each within his own tribe.

154 c) The societies composed only of sorcerers are recruited from many different tribes, as the need arises, whatever may be the political relations, hostile or not. The societies embrace the whole nation. A sorcerer is always allied to every other sorcerer, at least from the point of view of organization, for often their struggle for influence is implacable.

515

These sorcerer's societies do not have totems but obey a spirit.

154 I have already mentioned the various changes of form assumed by sorcerers, and I shall return to this briefly in order to show that the different forms must not be confused, as has often been done, with the nagual, or sorcerer's "dedicated animal."

825

[Two paragraphs omitted. --Translator]

[Page 468 and three paragraphs on p. 469 omitted. --Translator] [469]

Having eliminated all totems that do not belong to the sorcerer as such, the following points confront us:

1. At first glance each sorcerer appears to have his totem -- animal, bird, reptile -- to which he pays particular tribute. [470]

The majority of writers apply the word nagual, nyarong, etc., to this familiar animal, and the group of facts connected with the nagual is naturally called nagualism. Now these writers see in the nagual, nyarong, etc., and in nagualism nothing but a special form of totem and totemism. Is this opinion justified -- is the nagual a totem?

[Three paragraphs omitted. --Translator] [471] [Three paragraphs omitted. --Translator]

The nagual, according to Van Gennep, following Lang, is the local name of the individual totem.

As regards the Fan I should not agree, and all the investigations we have been able to make among neighboring tribes as well as in Madagascar (to whom Van Gennep refers) bear out this opinion. The nagual is not the local name of the individual totem but of "an" individual totem, or better still -- for I do not

757 that of his nagual and vice versa. If he is ill or if he dies, his
●575 nagual suffers or dies; if the nagual dies or suffers, so the man dies or suffers.

[Pp. 474-480 omitted. --Translator] [481]

Initiation of the Practitioner

575 791 The practitioner at the time of his initiation undergoes a different kind of test from that which young [ordinarily] men do. These tests are distinguished by a more marked degree of cruelty and especially by the offering of a victim. The victim will first be dedicated in special rites. After the tests and when the neophyte has been judged fit to enter the priestly company, then only is the totem chosen. But the choice is not left to the candidate; the "admitting" practitioner gives it to him. He must first of all undergo a severe fast of at least seven days. During this time he is forbidden absolutely, under any pretext, to leave his hut, which is set apart in a portion of the forest reserved to practitioners and called éli bêngan. No person is allowed to approach. Any intercourse with women, even a mere glance, [B62 688] would bring about permanent exclusion. Moreover, the woman would be put to death, and her father or husband would have no right to compensation, pecuniary or other.

During the neophyte's seclusion his "admitting" [practitioner] has chosen the totem; avoiding many complications, he almost always chooses the class totem to which the confraternity is already dedicated.

What kind of totems are they? They never belong to the mineral realm, nor are they ever celestial phenomena, nor spirits of any sort, materialized or not, as happens with clan or tribal totems.

575 791 825 The class totem is usually a bird [or] a swiftly moving animal, rarely a fierce one when the choice would be made because of the animal's positive qualities and not for its power to harm. Indeed the secret society prefers to seek as protecting totems, those that will guarantee swift and sure retreat in case

515 791 825 of danger. Hence the symbolic choice of fast birds: the river swallow, the koulyebe that flies like an arrow, the eagle or the vulture whose powerful flight protects it from enemies, the turtledove or the wood pigeon that knows how to conceal a nest so as to escape all attention. Or it might be an antelope with nimble legs and acute hearing, [482] which is especially difficult to capture. Finally, the crocodile sometimes appears as a totem not because it is bad tempered and devours men, but because it is always on the watch and at the slightest disturbance submerges itself and disappears in the river or because its scaly covering makes it invulnerable to arrows and javelins.

Such are the qualities that a secret society demands for itself.

515 791 782 The "consecrator" has chosen the totem, generally that of a class. He must now procure one himself but catch it "alive." He brings it into the hut of the "consecrated" one, who keeps it, at least as much as possible, on his chest throughout a whole night. In the morning the totem is led with great ceremony to the middle of a clearing and sprinkled with lustral water: the attending practitioners dance around it, then sing the hymn to the totem; the candidate sings it along with them. This hymn extols the totem's strength, valor, and swiftness, and especially thanks it for the protection given the society. Then, after this hymn, the candidate fetches the victim, whom he must offer, and leads him [567 562] before the totem. Ordinarily, the victim is a foreign slave, because he should not belong to the Fan nation, in order to avoid any possible ritual offense. (1) It is, however, permissible --

> 1. A foreign slave or a woman is chosen because neither possesses a totem and therefore no ritual offense is to be feared.

and this often happens -- to take a Fan woman. The slave or [274] woman is tightly gagged. Usually no resistance is offered, especially since the victim is given aldwand to drink the evening before, a decoction of herbs and woody mushrooms that have the property of suppressing memory. The neophyte forces the victim to walk in front of him, or pushes him, going around the totem

595 791 782 three times. He then pulls him down to the ground, binds him in front of the totem, and with one stroke of the mfor cuts the carotid arteries. The blood is collected in a clay pot, which is carefully broken after the ceremony and buried. When the blood has stopped flowing, the practitioners approach. The leader, the others next, and the neophyte last, dip their hands into the pot and sprinkle the totem while they dance around it. [483]

595 791 782 266 Right after this the head practitioner approaches the totem and smears its neck with the victim's blood, then with one stroke cuts its arteries. The spouting blood is collected with care because no drop must fall on the ground, to avoid any profanation. The victim's blood is mixed with the totem's, and everyone dips his hand into the pot and stirs; when the contents have been thoroughly mixed, the pot is put on a fire that has been prepared and, as soon as the blood starts to coagulate, each person present approaches and drinks a bit. The neophyte takes his turn last and has to drink all that is left no matter how much.

The victim and the totem are then placed on a special pyre. Often the victim's body is opened and the heart removed and the totem's body put in its place. When the fire has pretty well roasted both bodies, they are taken off and the victim's is put aside for eating. The totem is put back on the fire and entirely consumed, except that its burnt and pulverized bones are preserved. The victim's bones are also kept and reduced to ash so that they may be mingled with the totem's. These ashes are eventually divided among all those present; the larger share going to the new practitioner to form his "totemic" fetish, which he will make use of whenever he appeals to his totem. In particular, when he takes part in the "consecration" of a new practitioner, he will, after the immolation of the totem as just described, put a pinch of these ashes on the totem's body: all his colleagues will do the same, in order to mystically unite all the totems in a common sacrifice.

[789]

At the end of the ceremony, the new practitioner must get rid of all signs of it before he returns to the village. He must see to it that no drop of blood, no trace of ash, be profaned. He breaks up the pyre, buries the pot for blood at a distance, and goes home only then, invested with a new dignity.

515 791 688

The ceremony is altogether secret in the sense that no layman may be present, but it remains a legal ceremony, and [484] everyone in the village -- if only through having had to stay away -- knows where and when it takes place. However, it must not be mentioned by anyone. Anyone doing so would have to pay a fine, usually of a fowl or its equivalent in value.

Thus the totem initiation of practitioner belongs to the ordinary scheme of things.

That of the sorcerer is quite different.

Initiation of the Sorcerer; the Nagual

154 515

In a book (1) published several years ago, the author, Mgr.

1. Sous le Ciel d'Afrique, Recits d'un Missionaire [Under the African Sky, A Missionary's Account], by the Rev. Father Buléon, Congregation of the Holy Ghost, pp. 88 ff.

Buléon ... gives an eyewitness account of the sorcerer's initiation. ...

[Footnote omitted. --Translator]

"To be initiated as a sorcerer means being initiated by secret ceremonies into certain rites through which one may gain some signal favor from a spirit whose power one recognizes. ...

"Motivated by revenge, avarice, or ambition, an African one day leaves his village, to which he only expects to return when armed with the mysterious and terrible power that will allow him to satisfy his desires. His journey's end may be distant; often he has excellent reasons for seeking, far away and usually outside his tribe, someone who will confer marvelous privileges upon him. His absence sometimes lasts [485] several months. ...

[Two paragraphs omitted. --Translator]

"The candidate is seated on the ground, wearing only a loincloth and tattooed more than the others. Undermined by severe privations made more hazardous by being uninterrupted,

515
154

subjected to skillfully graduated demands, participating in ceremonies that arouse his imagination while exhausting him by their length, he gradually grows weaker and feels overwhelmed by the somber and mysterious aspect of initiation and falls into a kind of hallucination.

"In the depths of the hut [where the initiation takes place], there is a crudely sculptured image. Beneath that has been put a bundle containing the bones of a man long dead, and in front a mirror has been hung with its face towards the spectators. In all initiation proceedings the candidate is brought before the mirror and asked: 'What do you see?' For a long time he has to reply: 'I don't see anything.' As long as the reply is negative the initiation has not been successful. But finally the expected sign appears; he sees the likeness of a man in the mirror. Then he is led aside and made to describe the man whose face he has just seen. He had never seen him before [486] and cannot have known him, yet he describes him with great precision, giving all the facial traits. No cheating is possible in this. From the description given, the initiator, who is able to judge the likeness, identifies the man whose bones are beneath the image. This proof allows him to decide that the initiation is proceeding on the right track.

"Sometimes the initiator demands more personal and more active cooperation from the person seeking initiation. ... he may require that he bring the skull and a few bones of a relative of the first degree. ...

"Only when he brings in the material proofs of his crime
[246] are the final rites carried out. The bones are thrown into a cauldron with herbs and other ingredients that are unsavoury. When the horrible mixture has been sufficiently cooked, the unfortunate man is made to drink a cup while the audience sings. Then what is left in the pot is divided, and everyone has a share.
[789] The small bones are wrapped in old rags, and this bundle is given to the initiate: it constitutes his talisman, which he will wear and which will protect him from the dangers he fears and obtain for him the favors he desires.

575
754
825

"There would seem to be nothing further except to pay the initiator and to carry away the treasure so dearly and criminally bought. But there is still a final ceremony. Initiator and initiate both are actors and witnesses in a strange scene which I should not describe were it not as authentic as it is apparently unbelievable. The new initiate's life is to be united through a bloody rite to that of an animal, who will thereafter be his personal animal, not a domestic or tame animal, but a wild beast living in the depths of the forest or the bed of a river. The initiator has made the necessary arrangements; he gives a signal: [487] at first no sound is heard in reply but soon in the bright moonlight an unknown participant is seen approaching the spot in the forest where it is awaited -- sometimes an enormous mass with a monstrous head, sometimes a feline form that crawls rather than walks, sometimes a long body that unwinds and undulates. Whatever the animal -- hippopotamus, panther, or snake -- it forgets the timidity or ferocity felt in the presence of man and submits docilely to the desired operation. Then the exchange of blood takes place. How this is done is not our concern. But what is beyond any doubt is the fact that blood is let, of the animal and of the initiate, and that each is inoculated with the other's blood. The animal's ear is slit (a corresponding cut is made upon a snake) as a mark
[304] of the link established with the man, in whose arm an incision is made so that he in turn is marked with the sign of the beast. (1)

1. [The footnote, referring to mediaeval witchcraft practices, is omitted.--Translator]

A real link henceforth exists between them. The animal will be at the beck and call of the person who has been made his master. I could name ... a certain Black man who at night receives a vulture or a panther with slit ear, and another who allows into his hut and even his bed (ikoko) a python that recognizes his authority. When day comes, and the tasks have been

575 754 825

performed, the animals return to lake or bush, just as dangerous, often more so, to all whose blood they have not received.

"This union is so close between animal and man that the life of one depends upon that of the other.

"How many examples I could give! Should you kill a panther that bears the mark, you will not long afterwards learn of the death of some sorcerer. Should the sorcerer be the first to die, don't be surprised at finding near the village the dead body of his personal animal."

[One paragraph omitted. --Translator] [488]

[One paragraph omitted. --Translator]

In contrast [to the position with regard] to totems, both men and women can have a nagual, since both can be sorcerers. Yet those naguals are not the same for both sexes.

Among the Fan, the naguals that belong to men, with rare exceptions, are:

1. panther, incorrectly called tiger, nze; and by far the most frequent.

2. black snake, elom, sometimes the python, mvom.

3. crocodile, nkôm, rarely the ngân or cayman, never the earth saurians.

4. hippopotamus, ngbbe or nguve.

5. wild boar, ngô.

6. vulture, nkôô, but very rarely.

[One paragraph omitted. --Translator]

The naguals belonging to women are:

1. black snake, kagôlakagôla, different from the mvom.

2. vulture, nkôn. [489]

3. earth saurians; rarely the crocodile.

4. a kind of owl or night bird, akûn.

5. green snake found in banana trees, fôl.

6. a kind of horned viper, fî.

[Nine paragraphs omitted on p. 489. --Translator] [Page 490 omitted. --Translator] [491]

[One paragraph omitted. --Translator]

The dândla, may quite well also belong to the animal clan to which individual, clan, or tribal totems are related, and this

515 757 825 can lead to much confusion. Sorcerers are people particularly eager to conceal themselves and at the same time to assert their power, and they are often clever at doing so. They succeed in disguising the real nature of their nagual: "It's my totem," they will say, if someone surprises them with their élâñela. To be able to make their supposed totems appear at will often gives them special authority, which they can make good use of in certain circumstances. Indeed, one can imagine the prestige gained by a sorcerer who during a ritual ceremony thus calls on his totem, in reality his nagual. But ordinarily he restrains himself, for he would then unmask his sorcerer's character, and, unless he is all-powerful and protected from revenge, that is not at all what he has in mind. ...

[49] According to certain chiefs, especially among the Bêkwé, the totem of the founder of the race or clan was originally his élâñela. This is perfectly admissible. If by one or another means the founder of tribe or clan was able to bind an animal to his will, to make it obedient, or at least to persuade his followers that this was so -- which amounts to the same thing -- these men may very readily, after his death, choose his élañela for their totem. But this choice, which is determined by circumstances or the wish of the dying chief, does not imply that it remains an élâñela. On the contrary, this characteristic [492] disappeared by the very fact of its becoming a totem and ceasing to be a unit in order to become a collective group through its descendants.

[Two paragraphs omitted--Translator]

In a certain number of cases it has happened that the nagual is confused with the sorcerer himself. In fact, according to the Africans, sorcerers often transform themselves into animals. ...

[Three paragraphs omitted. --Translator] [493]

[Three paragraphs omitted. --Translator]

Almost always, I am convinced, these [phenomena] may be attributed to men being disguised as animals, either to safely satisfy their murderous impulses or to obtain victims for feasts of human flesh.

In some cases these men act under the mysterious influence of unknown agents. This perhaps involves a kind of unconscious

675 764 825 possession. They believe and declare themselves to be really transformed into animals. ...

Finally, when it is not a question of the [sorcerer] in disguise (which is nearly always the case), one often deals with his nagual, obedient to his instructions and prompting, at least in the beginning. After the animal has tasted human flesh [494] it is eager to return of its own accord. I remember that in a village in the interior, a panther had devoured 37 persons within a year. A sorcerer was accused of having the animal under his command and, as a result, after confession he was killed. The next day the panther was found dead in the forest. A coincidence? Perhaps the sorcerer had made use of the panther the first time, but in connection with the other killings, I have my doubts. In any case, this panther had an ear slit by human hand, as I was able to verify. Without passing judgement on the outcome, this was an obvious sign that it was "dedicated."

In their main outlines, the sorcerers' confraternities [sic] are modeled on those of practitioners. Both, therefore, possess two distinct categories of confraternity, or secret society, one set composed of initiates directed and controlled by practitioners and sorcerers, the other composed solely of practitioners or sorcerers.

1. Societies composed of initiates directed by sorcerers each has its totem, as do the similar societies directed by practitioners. This totem is always an animal -- a custom found almost universally and made necessary by the very concept of the totem.

575 764 776 2. Secret societies composed solely of sorcerers do not have totems; they obey a spirit.

[Two paragraphs omitted. --Translator] [495]

[Two paragraphs omitted. --Translator]

This spirit bears the name, engungure. It is also the name of the khun, or ghosts, or even of the souls of the dead after the postmortuary exercises and the final transformations.

unlikely to allow such a flouting of his authority. It is also feasible if the chief is old and feeble, and the rebel held in awe for his physical strength and especially his notorious bad temper, based on substantial proof. Also the "deserter" or "uprooted" man must not belong to any secret "clan" society, because the initiates never pardon [548] desertion, this is a primary and always inviolable law.

And that is not all. It is imperative for the new founder to find a willing totem. The choice cannot be at random, as some people may imagine, and there must be a series of sacrifices during which the chosen animal indicates its acceptance. In such a case, the personal totem will receive this honor, for it cannot be changed and not to select it would be a gross insult that would unfailingly lead to significant revenge. But the personal totem must agree to become the tribal totem. In so doing, the spirit -- much more intelligent than man -- knows that it is agreeing to become his actual and titular guardian and it is not always anxious to do so. In similar circumstances, Nzoge Nze admitted to me one day that before finally acquiring an accepting totem he had had to wait for several months and to sacrifice a good many fowls and even kids. The practitioner also had to be satisfied.

It should be observed that following this acceptance all panthers did not become Nzoge Nze's totems, but only those who inhabited the country and were the offspring or descendants of his nze or particular totem panther. This proves the truth of our system. Furthermore, these panthers were sacred only to Nzoge Nze, for each particular totem is particular only to its owner, not to his next of kin. Thus, one of Nze's sons had the anteater, avil, for a totem: he was therefore not supposed to eat it, although his brothers and sons did so with impunity. But once Nzoge Nze's totem, nze, becomes the family and, therefore the tribal totem, his children will avoid killing any panther, on the chance that one might be related to that nze. However, should they happen to kill and eat one, the offense would be only hypothetical and before expiating it, they would make the

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

754 *Vazye me dong onga lôn me* (Take away the curse you have [sent] put
578 upon me).
626 *Vazye me bikomelo* (Take away the curse).
539 *Vazye me bipeye* (Take away the curse).
Bôt bene mbômeda ch Anyambe edjam e mam mobê môn (People are cursed of God on account of their sins).

XIV.—*The Ngi.* (*A Fang Secret Society.*)

●575 To members (*Benwen*) the following things or *bityi* are forbidden :—
Bityi :—

1. To go and make or play at witch (make *evus*).
2. A male fowl is not to be eaten (shared) by two men of different clans.
3. Fish called *ngale* must not be partaken of with a woman.
4. Only the initiated are permitted to eat the fish called *ngone*.
5. Only the initiated may witness the Ngi dances. A woman who attempts to witness an Ngi dance will sicken and die.
6. Only the initiated must know about the bones used by Ngi.
7. A member of the Ngi society is not permitted to sleep on his back.
8. Food refuse must not be destroyed by fire.
9. To spit in the fire is against the law of Ngi (not permitted).
10. An uninitiated person will die if embraced by an Ngi.
11. To kick over rotten wood, logs, or forest stumps, is forbidden.
12. To cut a stick half through in the bush, and then bring it to town and break it, is forbidden. It must be cut through and the two pieces carried.
13. To kick the feet together after getting in bed, for the purpose of removing dust, is forbidden.

The violation of any of these mentioned *bityi* will bring misfortune and death on the *benwen* (member).

Ngi means gorilla among the Fang; Nji means gorilla among the Bulu. The Bulu have the Nji secret society, which is reported as being precisely similar to the Fang Ngi; it came to the Bulu from the Fang.

XV.—*War.*

726 During a tribal war all adults act as warriors. There is no regular organisation
[181] of fighting men. It is a typical guerilla warfare. Parties of young men go forth at night to attack towns; others watch the forest paths to shoot men passing and women going to work in the gardens. The Fang are noted for their love of war; they are the most warlike people in all West Africa. When a tribal war is on, a headman frequently goes out with a raiding party to attack the town; he carries with him the *biang-akumeyong* (protecting medicine of the tribe). The usual mode of attack is as follows: Having decided to attack a town, the party of men (usually ten or